

St. Joseph County Department of Health

Maternal Infant Health Initiatives

Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR)
Birth Equity & Justice St. Joseph County
Health before, during, & between pregnancies
Safe Sleep
Count the Kicks

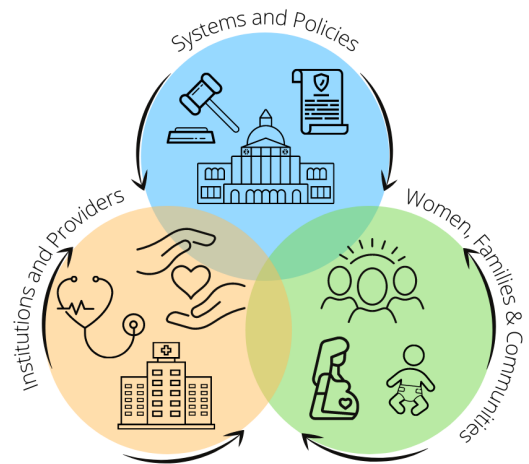


2021-2022

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Infant mortality is a measure of population health and how a community, state, or nation is faring in caring for the most vulnerable in society. Infant health is inseparable from maternal health and maternal health is inseparable from a woman's health and well being before, during, and after pregnancy. St. Joseph County Department of Health (SJCDoH) Maternal Infant Health Initiatives are focused on community action built around three key areas that will lead to a reduction in infant mortality and the elimination of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities in infant and maternal health. These areas include:

- ⇒ **Systems, Policy, and Legislation:** to address the structural and social determinants of health.
- ⇒ **Healthcare Institutions and Maternal Child Health**
Professionals: to improve quality, address implicit bias, and facilitate collaboration with community based care through relationship building and consultation with providers and hospital systems.
- ⇒ **Women, Infants, Fathers, Families, and Community:** to facilitate engagement to identify community needs, solutions, and participation in community led action.



The focus of our community action priorities are based on the recommendations and review of more than 220 stories of infant and fetal loss studied by the Fetal Infant Mortality Review Case Review Team since 2016.

In 2021, the SJCDoH received a Safety PIN grant from the Indiana Department of Health (IDoH) to support the creation of a Maternal Infant Health Coordinator position to facilitate community action in addition to the Fetal Infant Mortality Review Coordinator role that focuses on case review preparation and maternal interviews.

2021 Accomplishments and 2022 Priorities

ELIMINATE RACIAL, ETHNIC, & SOCIOECONOMIC INEQUITIES IN BIRTH OUTCOMES.

In St. Joseph County, the infant mortality rate (IMR) for Black infant has been 2.5 to 4 times the IMR of white infants for over a decade. Since 2016 we have seen an encouraging downward trend in this disparity, however, the slow pace of this decline is unacceptable. SJCDoH seeks to achieve the Healthy People 2030 goal of an IMR for all infants at 5 or less.

2021 Birth Equity & Justice St. Joseph County Community Engagement & Policy Committees

- ◇ Beacon Health System Safety PIN Grant partner to address birth equity.
- ◇ Conversations for Black Maternal Health Week Online Event
- ◇ National Birth Equity Collaborative Birth Equity Assessment and Workplan Process Initiated
- ◇ Birth Equity & Justice Luncheon for First Ladies of the Church & Female Clergy
- ◇ Birth Equity presentation for Memorial Hospital obstetric nursing staff.
- ◇ Presentations for the NAACP South Bend, Kingdom Life Christian Cathedral
- ◇ Engagement with elected officials during Indiana General Assembly regarding pregnancy workplace accommodations and direct reimbursement for doulas through Medicaid and private insurance.
- ◇ Virtual meetings with US House and Senate members regarding Pregnant Worker Fairness Act & Black Maternal Health Omnibus legislation.

2022

- ◇ National Birth Equity Collaborative Birth Equity Assessment and Workplan Process Continues
- ◇ April 13, 2022: Achieving Birth Equity event for prenatal care providers and community leaders
- ◇ April 14, 2022: Achieving Birth Equity conference featuring Dr. Joia Crear Perry, key note speaker. Dr. Joia is the Founder and Executive Director of the National Birth Equity Collaborative, and OBGYN, and thought leader on racism as a cause of health disparities.

PROVIDE DATA, INFORMATION, AND CONTINUING EDUCATION TO ELECTED OFFICIALS AND MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH PROFESSIONALS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY ACTION IN THREE PRIORITY AREAS.

The consensus of research in the field of maternal infant health emphasizes the need to “shift our focus from the individual behaviors of pregnant people as the cause of infant mortality disparities and develop a system of clinical practice that delivers respectful care” and creates a community that supports positive health outcomes. The impact of social and structural determinants of health that can be changed through policy are demonstrated through data and interviews with families who have experienced an infant or fetal loss.

2021

- ◇ Fetal Infant Mortality Case Review Team
- ◇ Annual Update for Local, State, and Federal Officials
- ◇ Infographics and data for legislation under consideration.
- ◇ Collaboration with non-partisan groups supportive of maternal infant health legislation.
- ◇ Evidence based educational materials for patient education in hospital, provider office, & community settings.

2022

- ◇ January 12: Memorial Hospital Grand Rounds with Dr. Tucker Balam - *“Infant Mortality Prevention in St. Joseph County – It’s Much More Than Safe Sleep”*
- ◇ March 23: Educating the Whole Physician Series at University of Notre Dame with Dr. Carlos Bolden—*“The role of healthcare providers in eliminating racial inequities in maternal and infant health outcomes.”*

IMPROVE SLEEP-RELATED DEATH PREVENTION EDUCATION FOR PROVIDERS AND FAMILIES.

Sudden Unexpected Infant Death is the 2nd leading cause of infant mortality in St. Joseph County and the leading cause for infant deaths that occur at home. SUID is largely preventable when families utilize the ABC’s of safe sleep (alone, on their back, in their own crib) and eliminate significant risk factors including smoking, the presence of pillows and blankets, and refraining from propping a baby’s head or body on pillows.

2021—2022

- ◇ Maternal , Infant, & Preconception Health Workgroup: Creation and distribution of infographics and locally focused educational materials.
- ◇ Collaboration with IDoH public health messaging for safe sleep.
- ◇ Presentations and outreach to obstetric and pediatric providers about most frequent contributing factors to unsafe sleep deaths in St. Joseph County.
- ◇ Facilitate awareness of and connection to maternal mental health support.
- ◇ Advocacy for policies known to decrease post-neonatal infant mortality including paid leave, breastfeeding accommodations in the workplace, increased cigarette tax, and living wage.

CONNECT MOTHERS TO FIRST TRIMESTER PRENATAL CARE AND INTEGRATE CLINICAL CARE & COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS TO PROVIDE CONNECTION TO SUPPORT & RESOURCES INCLUDING DOULA CARE, COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS, SOCIAL WORK, MENTAL HEALTH, AND NURSING CARE.

FIMR data reflects that system barriers contribute to delays in access to prenatal care, including the Medicaid application process and connecting with healthcare providers. In addition, mothers and families need assistance to navigate the system and connect to the programs and resources available in the community.

2021—2022

- ◇ Maternal Infant and Preconception Health Workgroup
- ◇ IDoH Safety PIN Grant Award to partner with Women’s Care Center with SJCDoH Community Health Workers.
- ◇ Continued collaboration with My Healthy Baby/OB Navigation providers
- ◇ Birth Equity & Justice SJC activities.

IMPROVE WOMEN’S HEALTH BEFORE AND BETWEEN PREGNANCIES THROUGH ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE.

FIMR data demonstrates that attention to preconception health indicators including smoking, hypertension, folic acid, pregnancy intention, mental health, substance use, and diabetes can improve maternal and infant outcomes.

2021—2022

- ◇ One Key Question ® pregnancy intention screening pilot projects with Northern Indiana Maternal Child Health Network and Healthlinc.
- ◇ Folic Acid Awareness project with IDoH